



Maricopa County

News Release

Environmental Services Department

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Maricopa County Confirms Roof Rat in Ahwatukee

PHOENIX (January 26, 2004) – Maricopa County Vector Control confirmed today that a roof rat was discovered at 51st Street between Elliot and Warner in Ahwatukee. The roof rat was killed by a resident and called in to the Environmental Complaint Line for identification.

"The message stays the same for Ahwatukee residents," said John Townsend, vector control manager. "Get rid of the roof rats' food supply and you will stay clean of rats."

Roof rats prefer to feast on citrus and nuts, but in a time of need will eat almost anything including pet food and garbage. Residents are asked to harvest citrus and nuts and cut back any thick brush where the rats may nest. These nocturnal animals require a lot of water to stay alive and will do their best to stay off the ground instead choosing trees, attics and power lines.

Roof rats continue to be tested by the Arizona Department of Health Services for plague, hantavirus and tularemia (rabbit fever). All tests have come back negative.

Roof Rats were first discovered in Maricopa County in 2001 in East Phoenix and Scottsdale neighborhoods. Through a partnership with Maricopa County, City of Scottsdale and Arcadia's aggressive Neighbor to Neighbor program, neighbors have learned that annual removal of food sources and overgrown vegetation on their properties are the most effective way to curtail individual property infestations.

To date, roof rats have been identified in Phoenix, Tempe, Glendale, Paradise Valley and Mesa. Residents who think they may have roof rats can contact the Maricopa County Environmental Complaint Line at 602-506-6616 or log in a complaint at www.maricopa.gov/envsvc.

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